

## May 21, 2016 Update From Francis

Some of you have contacted me or some of the other Directors of SOCA regarding an item that appeared in the minutes of the Pastoral Advisory Council meeting of April 13, 2016. It was Item #10 in the Pastor's report which read:

**10. Correspondence from the Congregation of (sic.) the Clergy - we have received a letter notifying us that they have rejected the arguments from SOCA for the reopening of St. Pat's. They will consider the Bishop's silence through inquiry; the Bishop's response indicated that SOCA's concerns were earlier addressed. The case appears to be at a conclusion. "**

It is clear from this minute that information that Father Kevin Tumback gave the PAC meeting on April 13 was inaccurate and misleading. I wrote to Fr. Kevin asking for a clarification. I have not had a written reply but he addressed the issue at the PAC meeting yesterday:

1. *"we have received a letter":*

Father Kevin clarified that he has not heard from the Congregation for the Clergy as some of you assumed when you read that minute. He was referring to the letter that I had received from the Congregation which I had sent out in my Update of March 17, 2016, a copy of which I always send the Pastor and Associate Pastor. Some of you wondered if the Congregation had written a new letter to the Diocese especially as Minute #10 above had absolutely no resemblance to the content of the letter I received.

2. *"they (i.e. the Congregation for the Clergy) have rejected the arguments from SOCA for the reopening of St. Pat's":*

First of all, it was **not** SOCA that wrote to the Congregation. It was I who wrote as Procurator representing over 500 parishioners. I did not write in my capacity of Secretary of SOCA so SOCA should not even have been named in this context. I regret to say that SOCA continues to be blamed for all kinds of evils when all SOCA is trying to do is save our three churches.

Secondly, Fr. Kevin informed the meeting that it was the Diocesan expert on Canon Law, Fr. Brian Hubka, who had advised him that the Congregation *"had rejected the arguments from SOCA for the reopening of St. Pat's."* With due respect to Father Hubka and his knowledge of Canon Law, even a layman like me can see that nothing in the Congregation's letter suggests that they have rejected the arguments against the closure of St. Pat's. On the contrary, the letter clearly states, *"this Dicastery (a legal name for the*

Congregation) *hereby accepts the aforementioned recourse* (i.e. whether the closure of St. Patrick's by the Bishop was in accordance with the norms of Canon Law") *for examination.*"

I think it is important to reiterate what I said in the Update of March 1, 2016, a copy of which I sent Fr. Kevin. I said that the good news is that the Congregation has confirmed that they will examine if the closure of St Pat's by the Bishop was in accordance with Canon Law. **It is entirely possible that the decision could go either way.** As of today we have not heard of any decision by the Congregation. Neither has Father Hubka nor Fr. Kevin so they cannot presume to know what the Congregation's decision will be before we hear from the Congregation. It was upsetting and hurtful to read in the PAC minutes the erroneous information in Minute 10. Such partisan statements on the part of the Pastor are not conducive to bringing about healing in our parish community. He may have avoided this error if he had taken the trouble to read my Update instead of consulting the Diocesan canon law expert.

3. *"They will consider the Bishop's silence through inquiry."*

This is a meaningless statement as it stands. What the letter from Cardinal Stella actually said was that I, on behalf of the 500+ parishioners who had signed mandate forms, had submitted a request "for hierarchical recourse against the administrative silence" of Bishop Henry concerning our request to Bishop Henry to reopen St. Patrick's Church for sacred worship. The letter goes on to say that the Dicastery "accepts the aforementioned recourse for examination." ACCEPTS. How Fr. Kevin or Canon expert Fr. Hubka could interpret this and report that the Congregation has "rejected the arguments from SOCA for the reopening of St. Pat's" beats me. When the Congregation gets back to me with a decision, I shall report it, whether it is in our favor or not, believe me.

4. *"The Bishop's response indicated that SOCA's concerns were earlier addressed."*

This is an entirely erroneous statement. Firstly, it was not SOCA that wrote to the Bishop. As Procurator for over 500 parishioners, I wrote two letters to the Bishop regarding our concerns. He did not reply to either letter so I then proceeded to write to the Congregation for the Clergy.

5. *"The case appears to be at a conclusion."*

This is another erroneous statement. Nothing in the letter gives any indication that the case appears to be at a conclusion.

In view of the confusion created by the erroneous and misleading information in the Pastor's report made by Father Kevin at the April 13, 2016 PAC meeting and disseminated through the minutes, I have decided to attach the report I gave at the SOCA General meeting on April 24, 2016 as well as the letter I received from the Congregation. As many of you were unable to attend that meeting, I hope that my report will give you a clear and accurate picture of where we are at in terms of our appeal to the Congregation. We hope and pray that we shall hear favorably in the near future from the Congregation for the Clergy. Until the Congregation informs us of its decision, we cannot make any predictions as to the outcome of the Congregation's investigation. With due respect, I suggest that neither should Father Kevin or Fr. Hubka.